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On Buss and Turán's extensions of Haken's results

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In this note, we shall consider about Buss and Turán's extensions of Haken's result about the length of resolution derivations of the pigeonhole principle.

To determine whether if there exists a propositional proof system with short proofs of tautologies is one of the most fundamental problem in logic and computational complexity theory. A system S is called *super* iff there is a polynomial $p(x)$ such that for every tautology ϕ, S has a proof with length less than $p(|\phi|)$, where $|\phi|$ is the length of ϕ, and Cook and Reckhow showed in 1970's that the existence of a super system is equivalent to NP=co-NP. However, it seems that we have not have enough information about propositional proof systems nor a strategy which might lead us to the solution of the problem directly. Nowadays, showing a given system is not super and separating two systems with respect to the length of proofs are rather important as a research problem.

There are four typical propositional proof systems, called *resolution, bounded depth Frege, Frege*, and *extended Frege*, which are ordered from weaker one to stronger one (cf. [3, 6, 8]). It is known that resolution and bounded depth Frege are not super, and the pigeonhole principle plays a central role in their proof. Let PHP_n^m be a propositional formula which means that every function from $\{0,1,\ldots,m-1\}$ to $\{0,1,\ldots,n-1\}$ is not one-to-one. Then, PHP_n^m is a tautology whenever $n<m$.

Consider PHP_n^{n+1}. Haken [5] proved that every resolution derivation of PHP_n^{n+1} contains exponentially many clauses, and this shows that resolution is not super. Ajtai [1] showed that bounded depth Frege does not have polynomial size proofs of PHP_n^{n+1} by using some connection between bounded depth Frege and a system of bounded arithmetic and forcing arguments on models of arithmetic. Buss [2] proved that Frege has a polynomial size proof of PHP_n^{n+1}, and this fact shows the existence of a gap between bounded depth Frege and Frege with respect to the length of proofs. It is unknown that whether if Frege is a super system.

Consider PHP_n^{2n}. By using a result about the provability of the pigeonhole principle in bounded arithmetic which has been shown in Paris, Wilkie and Woods [7], we

can show that bounded depth Frege has proofs of PHP_n^{2n} with the length $O(n^{\log n})$. Buss and Turán [4] extended the proof of Haken [5] and showed that every resolution derivation of PHP_n^{2n} needs the length $O(e^n)$, hence it turns out that there is a gap between resolution and bounded depth Frege with respect to the length of proofs. However, it is still unknown that whether if every resolution derivation of $\mathrm{PHP}_n^{n^2}$ contains exponentially many clauses.

Let $p(n,m)$ be a binary function. By extending Haken's argument, Buss and Turán's proved that we can show that every resolution derivation of PHP_n^m contains

$$\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{2}{3}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}p(n,m)} \tag{1}$$

clauses if

$$\frac{i(m-2k-i-1)}{\frac{2}{3}(k-i+1)(k-i+2)} < 1 \tag{2}$$

for $0 \leq i \leq p(n,m)$. This shows that every resolution derivation of PHP_n^m contains exponentially many clauses if $m = O(n)$ since $\frac{1}{25}\frac{n^2}{m}$ satisfies this condition. However, this term is useless for the case $m = O(n^2)$ since $\frac{1}{25}\frac{n^2}{m} = O(1)$ when $m = O(n^2)$. In the following, we shall consider how one can find the term $\frac{1}{25}\frac{n^2}{m}$, and show that their result is optimal, in the sense that we cannot prove that every resolution derivation of $\mathrm{PHP}_n^{n^2}$ contains exponentially many clauses by modifying the term $\frac{1}{25}\frac{n^2}{m}$.

Let

$$\begin{aligned} q(i) :&= 2\left(\frac{n}{4}-i\right)^2 - 3i\left(m-\frac{n}{2}+i\right) \\ &= -i^2 + \left(\frac{n}{2}-3m\right)i + \frac{n^2}{8}. \end{aligned}$$

Since $k = (n/4)$,

$$\frac{i\,(m-2k-i-1)}{\frac{2}{3}(k-i+1)(k-i+2)} < \frac{3i\left(m-\frac{n}{2}+i\right)}{2\left(\frac{n}{4}-i\right)^2},$$

hence it is enough to show $q(i) > 0$ in order to prove (2). Furthermore, $q(i) > 0$ holds for $0 \leq i \leq p(n,m)$ if

$$q(p(n,m)) > 0 \tag{3}$$

since $q(0) > 0$ and the coefficient of i^2 in $q(i)$ is negative. Let $\xi(n,m)$ be the positive solution of $q(i) = 0$:

$$\xi(n,m) = \frac{1}{2}\left(-\left(3m - \frac{n}{2}\right) + \sqrt{\left(3m - \frac{n}{2}\right)^2 + \frac{n^2}{2}}\right).$$

Then (3) holds if and only if

$$p(n,m) < \xi(n,m). \tag{4}$$

Consider the case $m = an$. Then,

$$\xi = \frac{1}{2}\left(-\left(3a - \frac{1}{2}\right) + \sqrt{\left(3a - \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 + \frac{1}{2}}\right) n.$$

Hence, (4) holds if $p(n,an) = bn$ for sufficiently small b. Haken's $\frac{n}{25}$ can be obtained in this way while we must use a slightly different estimation of (2) for the case $m = n + 1$.

Consider the case $m = an^2$. In this case,

$$\begin{aligned} q(i) &= -i^2 + \left(\frac{n}{2} - 3an^2\right) i + \frac{n^2}{8} \\ &= \left(\frac{1}{8} - 3ai\right) n^2 + \frac{i}{2} n - i^2, \end{aligned}$$

so $q(b) < 0$ for any $b > \frac{1}{24a}$ for sufficiently large n, hence $\lim_{n\to\infty} \xi(n,an^2) \leq \frac{1}{24a}$. Therefore, any $p(n,m)$ with $p(n,m) = \omega(\log(n))$ does not satisfy (4), and this means that we cannot show that every resolution proof of PHP_n^m contains exponentially many clauses for the case $m = O(n^2)$ in this way.

Now we shall consider the case $p(n,m)$ is a monomial

$$p(n,m) = sn^t m^u,$$

where $s > 0$ and t and u are integers. Assume that $p(n,m)$ satisfy (4). By the above consideration, $p(n,an)$ must be $O(n)$ and $p(n,an^2)$ must be $O(1)$. So we have $t + u = 1$ and $t + 2u = 0$. Therefore, $t = 2$ and $u = -1$, and one can also determine s by the condition (3).

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